

## Methods on the Move: The Evolution of the ICA's Technology of Participation™

by Gordon Harper

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When I first encountered the ICA's forerunner, the Ecumenical Institute, in Chicago in January 1966, I was fascinated by what people referred to as "the methods." These were group processes that had been carefully crafted to achieve certain objectives. There seemed to be quite a few methods that kept developing and expanding in remarkable ways.

There were various attempts over time to categorize these methods. One I found helpful was the division into social, intellectual and spirit methods — a social method like "gridding" a geographical area, as used in the Fifth City Human Development Project; an intellectual method like "charting" an article or book to initiate a depth dialogue; and a spirit method like "contemplation" as a way to open oneself to the mystery of life and to deeper self-understanding.

Those of us in the "Movement," as we called the non-staff members of this organization in the latter 1960s, were always looking for new methods we could use in our own localities and work settings.

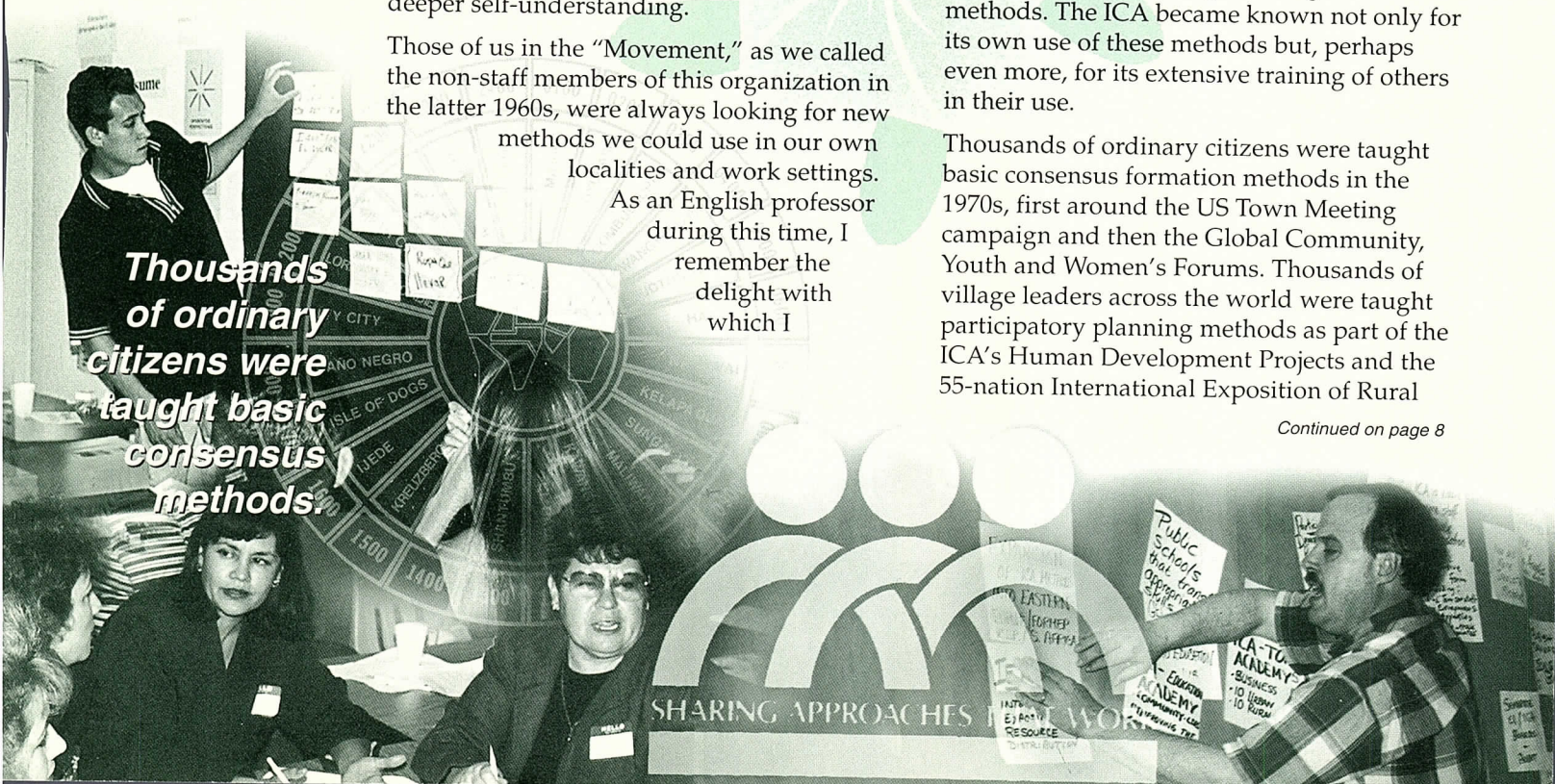
As an English professor during this time, I remember the delight with which I

incorporated the four-level "art-form discussion method" into my teaching of American literature. It was fun setting up early courses in the methods of Imaginal Education at my university and it was exciting to help members of our congregation grid the surrounding community and plan how we might move it toward greater interracial understanding.

During the next two decades, many of us moved along with these methods and what became the ICA, around the globe and into many different cultural settings. The methods catalyzed community development efforts, impacted government agencies, and introduced transnational corporations to participatory change processes. And, accompanying this — everywhere and always — was training, training in the methods. The ICA became known not only for its own use of these methods but, perhaps even more, for its extensive training of others in their use.

Thousands of ordinary citizens were taught basic consensus formation methods in the 1970s, first around the US Town Meeting campaign and then the Global Community, Youth and Women's Forums. Thousands of village leaders across the world were taught participatory planning methods as part of the ICA's Human Development Projects and the 55-nation International Exposition of Rural

*Continued on page 8*



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of ordinary  
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SHARING APPROACHES TO WORK



# Global Conference: 2000

by Ray Caruso

One thing I learned from my earliest contact with the Institute is that "context is key." As we prepare to host the ICA's Global Conference in 2000, I find myself asking, "What context is big enough and profound enough for such a momentous event?"

In answering this question, I've discovered some helpful insights in the work of Paul Ray, a sociologist who has been studying what he calls "Integral Culture." According to Ray, a new phenomenon is emerging in the United States, Europe and elsewhere, heralding a Great Divide in history. This phenomenon is indicative of a society in transition, as it moves away from traditional hierarchical, male-dominated patterns to embrace values of spiritual transformation, ecological sustainability, and the feminine principle.

Based on survey results, Ray profiles a group of "cultural creatives" — 44 million adults in the US alone who are the standard-bearers of the new Integral Culture. However, he cautions that periods of transition are inherently uncertain; on the crest of a Great Divide history may slide either way.

Clearly, cultural creatives are already hard at work. As we've begun to prepare for the ICA 2000 conference, we find ourselves surrounded by hundreds, maybe thousands, of millennium conferences, celebrations and gatherings around the world. A distinguishing feature of this event will be the use of Community Performance to dramatize the story of the ICA and the work of the various conference streams. Other outcomes will include:

- A profound story about living in the next century in a just, sustainable, compassionate, multicultural society

- A practical guide to sharing approaches that work in all sectors of society
- Global networks for collaborating around conference outcomes

In contrast to the practice at previous ICA global conferences, this time the ICA will invite conference partners in seven "streams" — Sustainable Development, Lifelong Learning, The Art and Practice of Participation, Innovative Philanthropy, Spirituality in Organizations, Community Youth Development and Art for Social Change. Partners will contribute to the design and the content of the conference. These partnerships will insure the conference is marketed by a number of organizations, that new funding opportunities are created, and that the groundwork is laid for post-conference project collaboration.

While there has been considerable discussion at meetings and via e-mail about the theme of the conference, it is yet to be finalized.

Current working titles include "Civil Society: Setting an Agenda for the Next Century" and "Participating in Profound Social Change in the Third Millennium."

The conference will be held from July 27 to August 2, 2000 at the University of Denver Conference Center, a beautiful setting with spectacular views of the snow-capped Rocky Mountains. The campus includes telecommunications facilities that would allow us to expand participation in the event to include others in different parts of the world via teleconferencing.

The ICAI Secretariat and Executive Committee, along with ICA USA Board President, Louise Singleton, are guiding the global conference. Each of the seven streams will be coordinated

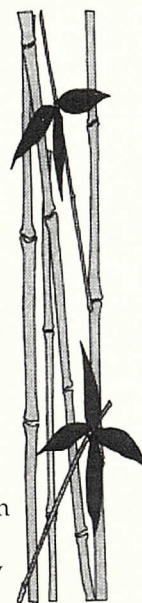
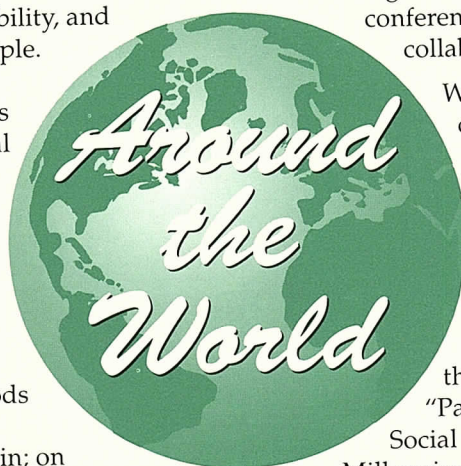
by a team made up of ICA USA staff and board, International ICA staff, partner organizations and youth. Stay tuned!

## A Growing Family

Reporting to the ICA International Executive Committee meeting in Brussels recently, Secretary-General Dick Alton named the growing list of countries where people have expressed an interest in starting an ICA. It includes Benin, Bosnia, Ghana, Indonesia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uganda. Invitations from several of these countries have come from people who have attended the International *Technology of Participation*™ Training of Trainers programs held in Phoenix, AZ, in 1995 and 1997. Another program is scheduled for 1999.

## On ToP in Asia

Ann Epps in Malaysia, reports that the ICA's Participatory Strategic Planning (PSP) methods have been used and taught recently in Malaysia, Mongolia and Thailand. PSP materials have been translated into Thai and Mongolian languages. In addition, 40 Asian managers of Redd Barna — the Norwegian Save the Children organization in Asia — from Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, have been taught *Technology of Participation*™ methods as part of a leadership development program conducted over the last two years. Said Ann, "It's gratifying to know there is a growing number of people who seek to facilitate understanding, decisions, and consensus in ways that promote group resolve, action and fun. We believe ToP™ methods provide a good way to do all of this."





## Neighborhood Academy Launched

After more than a year's preparation, the first Neighborhood Academy got off the ground in the border town of Gadsden, AZ, on May 16. Twenty participants, half of them youth, came from five neighborhoods, in addition to a group of students and teachers from CESUES University in San Luis, Mexico. The Academy is an eight-month training program for teams of youth and adults to increase leadership effectiveness at the community level. It is being piloted in Yuma and Maricopa counties in Arizona and funded in part by a grant from the Arizona Community Foundation. It continues the ICA's 35-year tradition of working in partnership with local residents and organizations to empower grassroots communities through its *Technology of Participation*.™

## Journey On, Lyn

When Lyn Mathews Edwards died in Chicago on June 4, the ICA lost one of its earliest and dearest members. Nearly 81, Lyn was the wife of ICA founder and dean, Joseph Wesley



Mathews and in recent years, of Bill Edwards.

The family requests that memorial contributions in

Lyn's honor be designated for the ICA Stories Project, a great passion of Lyn's. Checks should be made payable to the ICA CentrePointes Story Project, 4750 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60640.

## New Faces in the Southwest

Several years of work to develop a program of internships and apprenticeships in social innovation is paying off in the Southwest. The ICA's Phoenix office has just said goodbye to Denver-based Japanese student, Norie Kizaki who completed her three-month internship, and has welcomed several new people on board. Eva Vlasman, an international volunteer from the Netherlands, Andres Christiansen from Chile and John Krofchek from Mesa, AZ are working on the Neighborhood Academy. Apprentice Elizabeth Gonzalez from the border town of Sun Luis is working part-time with this team, out of the ICA's new office in Yuma, AZ. In addition, Martha Corral is doing a six-month internship from CESUES University in San Luis, Mexico.

## Empowering Senior Citizens

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), one of the largest and most powerful citizen organizations in this country, is looking for ways to become a more dynamic presence in community life. To help it achieve this, the AARP has turned to the ICA.

In response, the ICA has developed a two-day Community Development course that it is conducting in 20 out of 100 targeted communities this year.

While ICA Phoenix staff are leading the first half of these courses, AARP volunteers and staff are being trained to take over this role. The course draws on the ICA's rich history in community development. It includes a comprehensive assessment of community "realities," a workshop on partnership principles, and a six- to eight-month action plan.



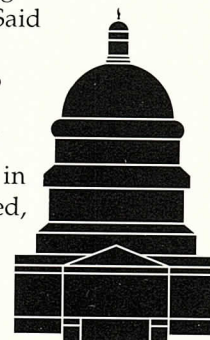
*Across these United States*

## Community Performance: A Spirit Artform

At the Spring '98 Gathering of the ICA Heartland, colleagues attended a production of "Scrap Mettle: Soul," a community performance sparked by the success of "Swamp Gravy" in Colquitt, GA. [See *Initiatives*, Spring '96.] This production inspired the group to work on a Community Performance about the journey of the ICA, to be presented at the 2000 Global Conference. Kansas City colleague, Donna Ziegenhorn, will guide the production as it develops over the next two years.

## New Images in Government

Government managers may not be known as innovators but in Tacoma, WA, recently, 22 facilitators and managers from three state government departments defied the stereotype. They were participants in the newest course in the *Technology of Participation* (ToP™) Series, The Power of Image in Facilitation. Led by Keith and George Packard of ICA Chicago, the two-day course introduced participants to image theory and a wide array of practical skills to add to their facilitator tool kit, ranging from charting an article to designing an event. Said ToP™ trainer David Whitting, who set up the program, "Given the long-term task of change management in which we are involved, the course was a valuable resource. I hope others will take advantage of it."





# The Year of the Tiger

by Shirley Heckman

**A**strologer Suzanne White predicts that during this Year of the Earth Tiger, we will live as captives of the disruptive, despotic, feisty, impetuous yet benevolent feline. We can expect universal upheavals and breakthrough discoveries. Sometimes painful, these periods of agitation give us the push needed to make our way through the financial, emotional and social underbrush and zoom out the other side victorious. In the midst of many surprises, we need to maintain our focus, while moving with courage, power and will.

All very fine but what has this got to do with the ICA? In January this year, at the ICA's Western Regional Office annual review and planning gathering, Phoenix colleague Jim Wiegel was leading a session. He turned to the group and said, "What metaphors describe the difference between our work in 1997 and the year to come?" Among a number of responses, one seemed to capture the group's imagination more than the rest — from "monkey to tiger"! As we later named our priorities for the year, we chose to make our first priority to name this "The Year of the Tiger."

While the whole group said a deep "yes" to this metaphor, different people had different takes on it. Said

Executive Director, John Oyler, "We need to be aggressive in pursuing our national priorities this year — the 2000 Global Conference, the structure of our national organization, marketing systems and Community Youth Development, of which the Neighborhood Academy in Arizona is an example. The tiger gives us a style in which to go after the other priorities."

For Community Development Assistant, Ronit Rahamim, it was a matter of "being more forceful in giving ourselves credit for our great history and performance as an

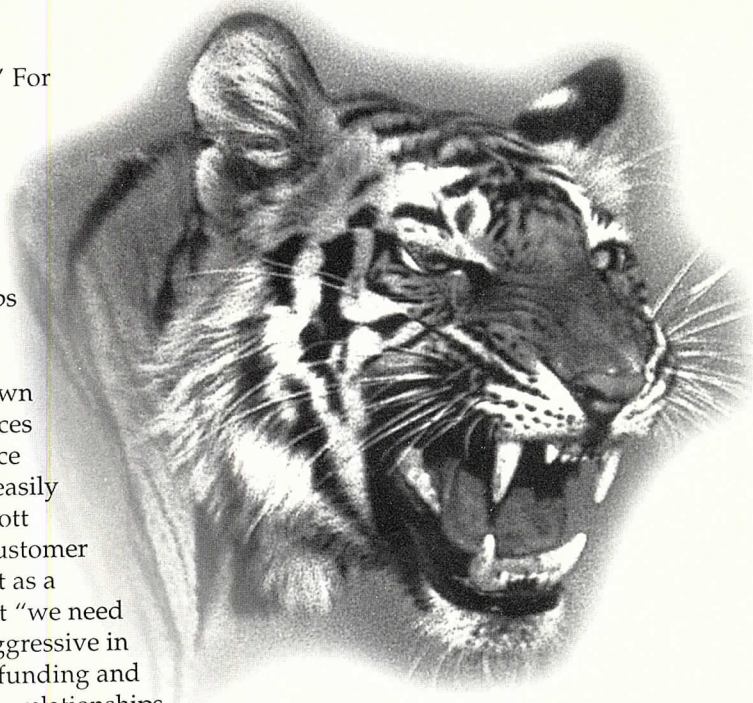
organization." For ToP™ Institute Director, Marilyn Oyler, it had to do with "needing to take bold leaps to make our national presence known so our resources and experience can be more easily accessed." Scott Monroe in Customer Service saw it as a reminder that "we need to be more aggressive in finding new funding and achieving new relationships with young people."

*I am the delightful Paradox.  
All the world is in my stage.  
I set new trails ablaze,  
I seek the unattainable,  
And try the untried.  
I dance to life's music  
In gay abandon.  
Come with me on my carousel rides  
See the myriad colors,  
The flickering lights.  
All hail me  
the unparalleled performer.  
I am the Tiger.*

Jim Wiegel, Southwest Neighborhoods Director, pointed out that tigers are in harmony with what's going on around them. Said Jim, "The ICA is at its best when we are consciously in tune with larger patterns." He also cautioned that in many places, tigers have become almost extinct in the wild, calling to our attention the need to engage the next generation of social innovators and to

transfer to them our bold spirit of taking on life's challenges. Jim had one final word of advice. "In itself, the tiger has no meaning whatsoever. But it reminds us to play around and be poetic and not to be overwhelmed with our own importance."

Adding to these words of wisdom, Suzanne White notes that for the tiger, timing is everything. She incorporates this insight in a final optimistic note. "This year, if we answer the challenges set before us at the proper moment and with sufficient enthusiasm, we can all hope to receive the most stunning chances ever laid before our humble selves." ☸



Shirley Heckman, with many tiger-like qualities, is Resource Development Director for the ICA's Western Region office in Phoenix, AZ, (602) 955-4811.



# Facilitating Mental Health by Ike Powell

*Treatment of mental illness has changed greatly over the past ten years. Rather than focus on symptom alleviation and medication side effects, treatment now includes intensive rebuilding of a person's sense of self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-control. Ike Powell tells how he has used the ICA's ToP™ methods to help do this.*

I recently phoned the Consumer Network office at the South Beach Psychiatric Center (SBPC) on Staten Island to get some information for my work. Nancy answered the phone. "Hi Ike. What can I do for you? I'm about to start a Dialogue on Hope with 20 inpatients but I can give you a couple of minutes." She sounded so confident, so self-assured, so in control.

That was not the case two years ago. Nancy is a "consumer" of mental health services. Eight years ago, she was diagnosed as "mentally ill." Like so many people, she has lived with the negative stigma of that label. She has been in and out of psychiatric hospitals, had severe bouts of depression, seen family and friends turn their backs on her, and attempted suicide.

Nancy has come a long way in her recovery. She attributes a lot of her progress to her participation in the Dialogue Facilitation Training Program conducted by the Mental Health Empowerment Project, Inc. (MHEP) in Albany, NY. Half way through the second day of the first training she attended, she said, "You think I'm going to get up in front of this group and lead a discussion? Why do you believe I can do that?"

Two years later, she tells a different story. "I've learned to have confidence in my ability to present myself. I've strengthened my leadership skills and have a better sense of whom I am and what I want." She is happily married and is hired 12 hours a week to work as a "Customer Rep" by SBPC. Her job is to bring her experience of recovery to inpatients at the hospital. As one who has been there and is in the process of returning to a "normal" life in society, Nancy has something to share that others don't have.

There are over 30 "consumers" hired to work for the mental health system in the Staten Island-Brooklyn area of New York City as Customer Reps. Some work four hours a week and others have full-time jobs with good salaries and benefits. MHEP has been involved with an intensive facilitator training program with the reps for more than two years.

Why facilitator training? First, having a skill — being good at something — is vital to one's self-esteem. Customer Reps lead a lot of mutual support, self-help and discussion groups in the hospital and in outpatient clinics. They know how to get people to share, to create a safe, non-threatening environment, how to prevent conflict and resolve it if it does arise, how to build a sense of trust in a group, how to listen deeply to what another is saying, and how to build consensus. One Rep commented, "Since the training, people have noticed changes in me every day. I get compliments all the time about my work and my appearance. Thank you."

Second, Customer Reps facilitate a Dialogue Series created by MHEP. The dialogues

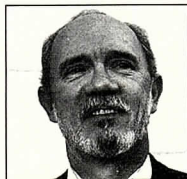
focus on such topics as: How do I sustain hope in my life? What has been helpful in my recovery? How has my mental health diagnosis been a disempowering experience? What has been most useful in learning

to cope with my illness? They are based on the ICA's *Technology of Participation* (ToP™) Discussion Method and an adaptation of the Workshop Method that allows for more story telling and sharing of personal experiences. Often they are conducted with no professional, non-consumer staff present. Inpatients see "one of us" leading the group, one who knows where they are coming from and what they are going through."

Learning ToP™ Group Facilitation Methods has not only given people personal skills but a way to function in other areas of their lives beyond their jobs. As one person commented, "Since the training, I feel more confident in myself and my own sense of self-worth has increased."

Once a person has learned the steps of the Dialogue process, s/he can use them to focus on any topic, as Customer Reps are now doing. They are conducting Dialogues on subjects ranging from "staying out of hospital" to "restoring self-pride." As skilled facilitators, they are responding creatively to their situations. What better way to build self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-control? ☺

Relate to a person's  
**Potential**  
and you call forth greatness.



On ICA staff for 20 years, Ike Powell is Deputy Director for Facilitator Training at the Mental Health Empowerment Project, (518) 434-1393.



*The Board of the ICA USA is a diverse group of people who represent the p  
It includes people with both long and recent connections to the organization. This s*

**Kristin Faust**  
Chicago, IL  
10 years



**Anne Doshier**  
San Diego, CA  
Fundraising, CYD  
10 years



**Ray Caruso**  
Columbus, OH  
Ex-Board President  
2000 Conference Chair  
Marketing  
25 years



**Jim Armour**  
Cincinnati, OH  
V-P Heartland  
Fundraising  
29 years



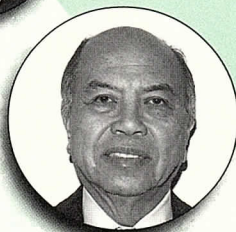
**Victoria Adams**  
Petersburg, VA  
V-P Eastern USA  
2000 Conference  
Board Growth  
17 years



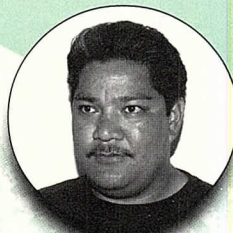
*The Bo*



**Paul Watson**  
La Mesa, CA  
CYD Co-Chair  
Board Growth  
10 years



**Abe Ulangca**  
Vestal, NY  
Board Growth, CYD  
E-mail List Keeper  
24 years



**Agustin Tumbaga Jr.**  
Somerton, AZ  
CYD, Marketing/IC  
7 years



**Martha Talbott**  
Atlanta, GA  
Marketing/IC  
29 years



**Louise Singleton**  
Denver, CO  
Board President  
Legal & Finance/NO  
27 years



**Vincenzo**  
Chicago  
11 years

*Note: Each person is listed by name, location, board responsibilities and the number of years s/he has been associated with the ICA. Absent is Richard Shealey of Michigan and Pat Consentino of Illinois.*



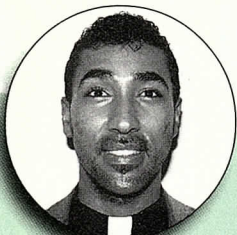
programmatic, geographic, ethnic and age diversity of the ICA in this country.  
 special feature honors the valuable contribution the board makes to this organization.

**Dwala Ferrell**

Petersburg, VA  
 Fundraising Co-Chair  
 CYD  
 2 years

**Cecil Gray**

Gettysburg, PA  
 2000 Conference  
 Fundraising, CYD  
 16 years

**Ellen Howie**

Altamont, NY  
 2000 Conference  
 Board Growth  
 29 years

**Heidi Kolbe**

Sacramento, CA  
 Board Secretary  
 Marketing Chair  
 5 years

**J'lein Liese**

Scottsdale, AZ  
 CYD Co-Chair  
 Marketing  
 8 years



ard of ...

# The Institute of Cultural Affairs in the U.S.A.

**Judy Lindblad**

Cincinnati, OH  
 Fundraising  
 Co-Chair  
 31 years

**Robert Maganuco**

Glencoe, IL  
 Legal & Finance/NO  
 Chair  
 10 years

**Robert Morgan**

Chicago, IL  
 Board Treasurer  
 Legal & Finance/NO  
 Fundraising  
 20 years

**Betty Pesek**

Chicago, IL  
 Asst. Secretary  
 34 years

**Carla Roberts**

Phoenix, AZ  
 5 years

**Saverino**

, IL

The board has four committees — Board Growth, Fundraising, Legal & Finance, and Marketing, as well as four task forces — Year 2000 Conference, Community Youth Development (CYD), Integrated Curriculum (IC) and National Organization (NO). Two task forces and two committees are combined.



## Methods on the Move ... *Continued from page 1*

Development in the early-to-mid 1980s. Thousands more men and women in corporations and government agencies learned the methods through the ICA's strategic planning workshops and leadership training seminars.

Over the past decade, the ICA has undertaken its own organizational transformation, a challenge some of us have experienced more than once in our history. This time it has involved reshaping ourselves into a network organization of largely autonomous and increasingly indigenous national entities. As we've shifted away from centrally planned and globally coordinated programs, there have been implications for our methods training, in terms of the methods themselves, the people who use and train others to use them, and the systems that have developed around them.

In 1989, the ICA commissioned a book, *Winning Through Participation*, that describes its basic discussion, consensus formation and planning methods. Prepared by a team under the leadership of Laura Spencer, this book reflected new ways the ICA was talking about and packaging its methods training seminars. It introduced a recently minted term for these classic methods, the *Technology of Participation* (ToP™). In the decade since its publication, the book has become a treasured guide for a whole new generation of ICA methods practitioners.

At the same time, the market for facilitation skills training has grown significantly, and along with it, the number and frequency of what have come to be known as ToP™ training courses. The names of the ICA's core processes — the Discussion or Focused Conversation Method, the Workshop Method, the Action Planning Method, and the Participatory Strategic Planning Method — have become familiar to thousands of new graduates of ToP™ training seminars across this country and around the world. As the number of these courses expands, it is becoming difficult to find many weeks in the year when training in ToP™ methods is not offered somewhere.

Participants still come to the public training seminars from communities, educational institutions, companies and government agencies. In addition, the ICA is being asked to provide more in-house training for these as well as for national and international non-profit organizations like 4-H, the American Association of Retired Persons, United Way, Habitat for Humanity, the National Network for Youth, and Women in Community Service. Often these invitations lead to ongoing collaborations that could hardly have been imagined ten years ago.

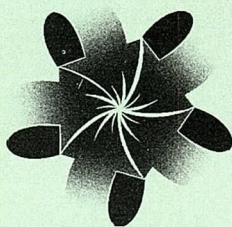
As organizations experience the effectiveness of ToP™ methods, they are finding ways to integrate them into their own operations. The Council of Energy Resource Tribes in Denver has dozens of Native Americans on its own staff and in its member organizations trained in ToP™ facilitation methods. The Washington State government, where the ICA has qualified internal trainers in the Department of Social and Human Services to conduct ToP™ seminars, now offers an annual series of facilitator training events for its various departments. More than 35 Human Resources and Organizational Development staff at

Honeywell are now trained in ToP™ methods. Facilitators at PACCAR, the Fortune-500 truck manufacturer, have incorporated what people humorously refer to as "the card method" into their regular project design processes. The nation's second largest independent financial institution, the Associates, of Dallas, has more than 50 ToP™ training graduates and uses the methods in its Business Excellence Department for problem solving and process improvement.

***In just three years, fifteen new national ToP™ training systems have emerged, with workbooks in at least ten languages.***

While going through its own transition, the ICA has been helping to invent new support systems around these training programs. In the United States, ToP™ training has become increasingly systematized, resulting in more professional trainers' manuals, participant workbooks and marketing materials that make it possible for new trainers to come on board in a relatively short time. At present, there are more than 200 ToP™ trainers in the





## Technology of Participation™ — an Expanding Resource

Spearheaded by its staff in Phoenix and Seattle, the ICA in the USA has developed a *Technology of Participation* (ToP™) training system that includes:

### Core Courses

- Group Facilitation Methods
- Participatory Strategic Planning

### Additional Courses

- Toward a Philosophy of Participation
- The Power of Image in Facilitation
- Application Design Lab

Other resources include:

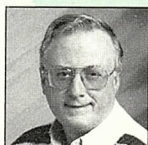
- **MToP: Mastering the Technology of Participation™** — an intensive, year-long training program in ToP™ methods for those wanting to increase their skills in facilitating group processes. The program provides a theoretical foundation for ToP™ methods, as well as opportunities for practice and feedback. It creates a learning community to support and deepen the journey of the participants.
- **In-House Courses** — ICA facilitators train staff of an organization in any of the above courses on location and work with the organization to develop strategies to use and customize these courses to create a culture of participation.
- **Consulting Services**, including:
  - Strategic Planning
  - Conference Facilitation
  - Management/Board Retreats

The above services are available in English and Spanish. For details, contact ICA Phoenix (602) 955-4811, 1-800 742-4032 or e-mail: [icaphoenix@igc.org](mailto:icaphoenix@igc.org). Check out the ICA website — <http://www.ica-usa.org>.

US, only a handful of whom are current ICA staff. Eighty of these offer regular courses in their localities. These people are giving form to a new reality in the ICA's history: the ToP™ Trainers Network.

This Network gathers annually to share experiences, explore areas of common interest, and plan its future directions. At the moment, it is organized into four functional "streams."

- A *Marketing Stream* is looking at ways to expand the existing client base for ToP™ methods. With help from colleagues in ICA Canada, it designed a splendid new 12-page Facilitation Skills Training brochure for 1998.
- A *Curriculum Development Stream* is working to develop and approve new courses for the ToP™ series. An annual activity is the Share Fair, at which Network members present and review courses they have generated. Last year saw the introduction of the Power of Image in Facilitation course [see page 3], and this year the launching of the Mastering the *Technology of Participation*™ program.
- A *Competencies Stream* has worked with the International Association of Facilitators to co-



Gordon Harper, who has been a part of the evolution of ToP™ methods, is Pacific Rim Services Director for the ICA in Seattle, WA. (206) 323-2100.

create and publish a set of professional facilitator competencies. It has now also issued the second draft of its ToP™ trainer competencies.

- An *Infrastructure Stream* is designing the overall Network services and coordination systems and overseeing the planning for this year's trainers' gathering in Chicago.

In addition, the ToP™ Trainers Network now has its own electronic listserv, which is in daily use. The ICA website publishes and updates course schedules, locations and registrar information for the year. Trainers also receive quarterly issues of the ToP™ *Methods Exchange* newsletter, which recounts the many different ways course graduates around the world are using the methods. This past year, a new addition was the publication of a directory of active ToP™ trainers in the US.

A large component in the ToP™ Trainers system these days is its global expansion. At the ICA International conference in India in 1994, people from several countries were intrigued how the ToP™ system operates in the US and sought a fuller understanding of it. This resulted in a four-week International ToP™ Training of Trainers program in Phoenix in 1995, with participants from 13 countries. A similar five-week program was held in 1997 with still other ICA staff and colleagues who were planning to launch ToP™ training systems in their countries.

Out of this, in just three years, 15 new national ToP™ training systems have emerged, with workbooks now available in at least 10 languages. The global exchange of trainers is especially exciting. ToP™ trainers from Denver and Albuquerque respond to requests from their counterparts in Bosnia to work there for a couple of months; a ToP™ trainer from Ghana is given a computer by a Phoenix colleague; and a trainer from Seattle joins ToP™ training teams in the UK.

Where will ICA methods show up in the future? That's a tough call. But the methods are certainly on the move — and it's quite a trip! When I was part of the Ecumenical Institute, I would find myself assigned to demonstrate the methods in a course some place I'd never been, with a team of people I'd never met. Being part of this new ToP™ Trainers Network has something of that same feel — a bit wild, a work in progress, and full of surprise, fascination and wonder. ☯



# Serving the Marginalized

**"G**od made every human being with a core that's good," said Emma Melton. "Our inability to have the right lens to see it is the problem." In her 64 years, Emma has had several different lenses to help her see that core.

One was her family in Louisville, KY, who gave her a lifelong love of learning and education. As a high school teacher, she encountered so many students who couldn't read, she decided to become a reading specialist, a job she did for 20 years. But for Emma, this was much more than a job; it was a serious commitment to address a deep-rooted problem in our society. "Many kids who leave elementary school without basic skills end up misbehaving and nobody ever deals with their depth concerns," she said.

Another lens was the ICA, and its parent organization, the Ecumenical Institute, which she first encountered in 1968. One of its messages, "all the goods, all the wisdom and all the decisions belong to all the people," reminded Emma of the negro spiritual her grandmother used to sing, "I'm Going to Sit at the Welcome Table." However, Emma noticed not all were sitting at the table. "In the late 60s, I felt the Institute's message was going to the more privileged and that marginalized people had no opportunity, so I decided to get as much as I could from this group and get out and share it."

Sharing it she has been doing, although her ties to the Institute remain strong. Most recently, she has poured her skills, energy and passion into a mentoring program with at-risk youth in her home city of Cleveland. Mentors, who have no knowledge of the youth's background or court record, help mentees reach three goals they name for themselves. The program received a jump start with a camp last summer in which skilled counselors led the youth in intensive, 10-hour days of sharing experiences, reflection, and physical activities. It also received a lot of support from the CBS affiliate television station in Cleveland, which broadcast a documentary on

the camp. As it enters its second year, the program is being financially supported by the American Baptist Churches who wish to extend it from its current sponsorship of 35 local churches to become a national youth at-risk project.

In addition to this work, Emma has made her mark in several other arenas. One was with "A World of Difference," a program to train teachers how to deal with issues of multiculturalism in the classroom. She has been doing this for more than six years under the auspices of the Anti-Defamation League. Here, she has made good use of her ICA training, particularly the *ToP*™ Discussion Method. "I always follow everything I do with a reflective conversation," said Emma. "It gives people a chance to get more inside of what is happening. This method is a gift that needs to be given to everybody."



Another of Emma's contributions to community life has been her work with strategic planning in four Cleveland neighborhoods, under the umbrella of Case Western Reserve University's Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. After the school had tried unsuccessfully for three years to work with neighborhoods, they turned to Emma and her ICA colleagues for help. "My first strategic planning was with 140 people — the Cleveland Clinic, banks, police, business people and residents. It was a tremendous experience," she said.

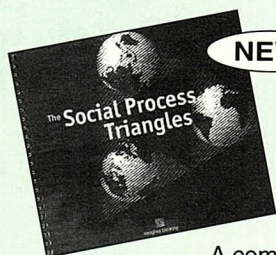
In recognition of Emma's many valued services to society, the Interchurch Council of Cleveland honored her with their Martin Luther King Ecumenical Award last year. She was shocked when it was first announced because she thought it usually went to "people of real note in the community." However, she was quick to see the gift it was. "I immediately saw it as a tremendous opportunity to tell the story of youth empowerment." Not surprising. After all, creating opportunities and the means for people to tell their own story has been a driving force in Emma Melton's life. ☯

***I always follow everything I do with a reflective conversation. This method is a gift that needs to be given to everybody.***

Emma Melton lives with her husband, Brady, in Cleveland, OH, (216) 991-6944.



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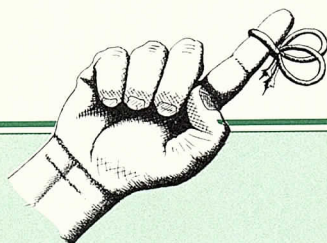
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